

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

Request from Partnership for Next Generation Learning districts for waiver of Section (2) of 704 KAR 3:305, Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.160 and 704 KAR 3:305

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) grant the Partnership for Next Generation Learning districts' request for a waiver of 704 KAR 3:305(2)?

History/Background:

Existing Policy. KRS 156.160(2)(a) states: "At the request of a local board of education or a school council, a local school district superintendent shall request that the Kentucky Board of Education waive any administrative regulation promulgated by that board. Beginning in the 1996-97 school year, a request for waiver of any administrative regulation shall be submitted to the Kentucky Board of Education in writing with appropriate justification for the waiver."

In 2010, the Kentucky Department of Education was chosen by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as one of seven states nationwide to participate in a consortium called the Partnership for Next Generation Learning. This partnership has as its goal to "transform the education system by implementing new and innovative systems of learning". The districts who have signed on to this request are seeking a waiver of the graduation requirement to complete 22 credits to graduate and then allow for individual students to demonstrate mastery of the Core Academic Standards in a variety of ways that may not be the result of sitting in a "Carnegie" unit class for a block, a trimester, semester or a year.

Specifically, the districts are requesting to be allowed to provide proof of graduation by:

Granting a competency-based diploma using local board-approved performance descriptors and assessments to include a requirement that students complete a locally-designed course of study, personalized to the individual student's needs and interests, that incorporates the breadth of the Kentucky Core Academic Standards and by which the student provides evidence of successful demonstration of the competencies expected of a Kentucky high school graduate.

In addition to the above requirements any student who chooses this alternate pathway shall complete the following accountability requirements:

- (a) Obtain a qualifying benchmark score, as determined by the Kentucky Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education, on each of the end-of-course examinations (Algebra II, Biology, English II and U.S. History) that make up the high school achievement portion of the accountability system per 703 KAR 5:200
- (b) Achieve the status of “college and/or career ready” based on successful completion of one of the pathways outlined in 703 KAR 5:200

The Partnership districts agree to keep records showing evidence that these criteria have been met and to make available these records as requested by the KBE. Each district agrees, at the request of the KBE and after an appropriate length of time, to report on the postsecondary success of these students.

Staff Recommendation(s) and Rationale(s):

Staff recommends that the KBE approve the partnership for Next Generation Learning districts’ request for a waiver of 704 KAR 3:305(2). This waiver will allow these districts to pursue instructional programs that provide greater opportunities to engage each individual student in ways that ensure increased numbers of college and career ready students.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

More students will graduate college and career ready.

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Commissioner of Education

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